

The Highland Council's Magazine

Spring 2020

Issue 14

Highpoints

Sàr Phuingean

Road to recovery

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Welcome

Since the Spring edition of Highpoints was put together, showing a vast amount of Council achievements in recent months and illustrating our performance against national targets, the devastating impact of a global pandemic has swept across our country.

Many people have fallen ill or lost loved ones through Coronavirus Covid-19; our NHS has been subjected to immense pressure; many individuals, businesses and organisations have been financially devastated; and the world as we knew it may never look the same.

Meanwhile, the Council has had to set aside business as usual and we have turned our attention to focus on supporting the public health efforts to delay the spread of the virus and protect the most vulnerable. A helpline has been established to match volunteering support to need in communities; welfare hubs have been

established to provide support to those most in need; care centres have been set up to help key workers with child care; our ICT networks have been bolstered eight fold to enable a huge increase to homeworking; and many staff roles have been repurposed to support the essential resilience work underway.

A key strand of the resilience work is to start planning for recovery and how the Council will move forward in the long term. There has been much to learn – new ways of working, born out of necessity and there will be more that we can learn as we adapt to very different circumstances. The Council will look very different in the future. We will come out the other side and the road to recovery will be long, but built through innovation, adaptation, team work and a new resilience.



Cllr Bill Lobban Highland Council Convener

Road to recovery

The Highland Council announced its biggest ever single investment in roads with an extra £20million capital agreed in its budget for the year 2020/21.

The budget was approved by members at the special meeting of The Highland Council on 5th March.

To support the investment in roads the budget included an increase Council Tax by 4.84% (just over £1 per week for those households on Band D) - which is broken down to 3% to balance the budget and 1.84% for investing in roads.

Council Tax Reduction recipients will continue to be protected (generally Bands A-C).

The increase will enable a fund of £20million for capital schemes and an additional

£1.3million of annual revenue for road maintenance.

Leader of the Council Margaret Davidson said:

“This budget is a road to recovery for the Council. We need to build our Reserves for a sustainable future; invest in Redesign in order to transform the Council; and make substantial improvement to our Roads.”

Budget Leader Alister MacKinnon added:

“The budget was shaped to deliver sustainability for local communities, to fund work to achieve efficiency and improvement, to restructure our services to enable change and address climate change, storm damage and future resilience.”

The budget will see an increase in the Council’s Reserves to improve the Council’s medium to long term financial strategy and a more resilient position to address a number of challenges and risks which lie ahead.

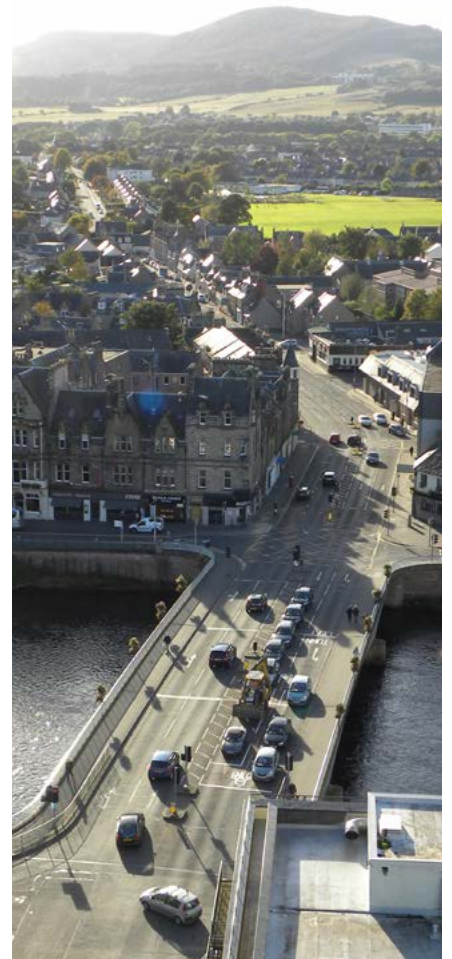


Photo by The Highland Council

The Council also agreed a proposal to invest £1 million of additional funding in a “Highland Deal for a sustainable future” - a Skills for Work Charter which will develop a range of initiatives and opportunities to retain young people, address poverty and reverse depopulation trends in rural areas. A further £0.5million is to be earmarked for rural transport projects.



Photo by The Highland Council



Photo by Ewan MacLeod

Look back to the Quality Awards

Employee of the Year

A long serving Housing Officer who has worked tirelessly to ensure tenants are given the support they need is The Highland Council's Employee of the Year.

Ron Archer has been a Housing Management Officer working in the Inverness team for 30 years and during this time has provided support to many individuals and families to help them through what can often be difficult and challenging times in their lives.

Runners up were Vicky MacDonald who works at Inverloch Primary in Fort William as a Pupil Support and Children's Services Worker and Fiona Emslie, a Learning and Development Adviser.

Community Awards

Community Payback Officer Jamie Sinclair nominated by Golspie Community Council;

Community Works Officer Alan Johnstone nominated by Kilmorack Community Council

Waste Officer Katrina Taylor, nominated by Garve and District.

Trainee of the Year

Digital Support Officer John Grieg was named Trainee of the Year.

Team of the Year

The Team of the Year went to the Fleet Hire and Travel Desk team who last year the dealt with over 6,000 travel requests and have consistently demonstrated success at implementing change and delivering service improvements.



The category winning projects were:

Delivering on Localism and Making the Highlands an Even Better Place to Live:

- **Just Ask Enquiry Line**

Supporting People to Learn and Thrive:

- **Macdiarmid Primary and Nursery**

Making Highland a Welcoming Place where People Succeed in Life and Business:

- **Dingwall Service Point and Relocation**

Delivering Efficiency, Earning Income and Improving Services:

- **Placement Services Change Programme**



He was presented with his award by the Leader of the Council, Cllr Margaret Davidson and Nitesh Jain from WIPRO during a ceremony held in Inverness Town House. The Awards were sponsored by Viridor, Hub North Scotland, Zurich Municipal, Morrison Construction and WIPRO with Enterprise Car Club providing additional hospitality.



The Convener's Award went to the Reducing Staff Travel project which has achieved £400,000 of savings last year and is on track to deliver a further £175,000 of savings to the Council this year.



The 2019 Outstanding Partnership Award went to a joint project between the Child Protection Committee and the University of the Highlands and Islands which saw Visual Communication and Design Degree students develop material for Child Sexual Exploitation campaigns to target young people across the Highlands.



New to Quality Awards were two Awards sponsored by the Chief Executive Donna Manson. The Staff Kindness and Care to Colleagues Award went to Sharon Bailey a Business Support Officer with the Care and Learning Service. The Kindness and Care to the Public Award went to the Corran Ferry.



CEX Donna Manson congratulated all staff and thanked them for their hard work. She said:

“There is a lot of work taking place which is not only achieving significant financial savings to the Council, but is leading the way nationally and reinforcing our reputation across Scotland as a forward-thinking and very pro-active local authority.”

Canal works

Works are going well on the final section of the West Link Project in Inverness that includes the construction of a second swing bridge over the Caledonian Canal to the South of the existing Tomnahurich swing bridge.

This tandem bridge arrangement will allow for the free flow of vehicle traffic on the A82 to continue, while boats pass through one or other of the open swing bridges. There will normally be two routes available for vehicles to cross the canal and vehicles will be diverted over one or other bridge, only while the other is open to allow boat passage.

Operation of the bridges will be managed from the new control building which has been built on the canal side between the two bridges.

The canal will reopen to all users before the end of this month. Bridge components are due to arrive in June and then construction will begin on site with a view to opening the new bridge to traffic by the end of this year.

Once all works are completed it will bring a conclusion to the West Link Project which has seen the creation of the link



from the Southern Distributor Road at Dores Road to the A82 including crossing the River Ness on the new Holm Mills Bridge, new sports facilities at Canal Parks including synthetic pitch and clubhouse and a relocated golf course, also with associated new clubhouse and maintenance facilities.

Land to the South of the A82, including a new Torvean Park will be accessed from a fifth leg of the proposed roundabout,

which will also allow local access to the canal towpath and to a new base for Jacobite Cruises.

Leader of The Highland Council Council Margaret Davidson said: "The first stage of the West Link has been a great success and both the road and active travel routes are being very well used, reducing congestion in the city. This stage of the West-Link will bring many more benefits to the area, including



reducing journey times for many. The second swing bridge will be an enormous bonus to keep the traffic flowing on the A82, especially with an aging Tomnahurich Bridge.

“Another feature of this project will be the new parkland adjacent to the canal, which will be opened up for everyone’s enjoyment, using the beautiful parkland setting of the former golf course with Loch na Sanais.”



Works at General Booth Road



Drained section of the Canal



Chair of the Environment and Infrastructure Committee, Councillor Trish Robertson said:

“The scheme is also enabling housing development and associated developer contributions as well as other opportunities. The fifth leg off the roundabout will allow more effective access to the canal-side, the rowing club, and other development land.

The Benefit to Cost Ratio of the West Link project is 3.86, which represents nearly £4 of benefit to every £1 of public investment.”

The £55 million West Link project forms part of the Inverness and Highland City-Region deal which is a joint initiative supported by up to £315 million investment from the UK and Scottish governments, Highland Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, and the University of the Highlands and Islands, aimed at stimulating sustainable regional economic growth.



Soirbheachas dhan Ghàidhealtachd aig FilmG 2020

Shoibhich le sgoiltean agus sgoilearan na Gàidhealtachd aig duaisean FilmG a chumadh air Dihaoine 14 Gearran ann an Glaschu.

Bhuannaich Bun-Sgoil Stafainn san Eilean Sgitheanach Roghainn an t-Sluaigh le 'Fàilte don Eilean'.

Bhuannaich Acadamaidh Chùil Lodair am Film as Fheàrr leis an fhilm 'Eilean nam Muc'.

Bhuannaich Àrd-Sgoil a' Phluic ann an Ros an Iar an Riochdachadh a B' fheàrr leis an fhilm aca 'An Corp' a tha mu mhurt is amharas air a' chosta an iar.

B' e 'Siubhal gu Sear' a rinneadh le Anndra Cuimeanach, sgoilear ann an Àrd-Sgoil Gheàrrloch, an aon fhilm a thog dà dhuais ann an earrainn na h-Òigridh aig farpais na bliadhna seo. Ann an 'Siubhal gu Sear' tha Anndra a' siubhal leud na h-Alba air dà chuibhill ann an aon latha. Bhuannaich e am Film Aithriseach a B' fheàrr agus Duais na Gàidhlig airson Luchd-labhairt Fileanta.

Bhuannaich am film 'Reòite' le clas fhileantach Àrd-Sgoil Àird nam Murchan duais Riochdachadh Eadar-nàiseanta FilmG, a' ciallachadh gum bi iad a' togail orra dhan Eadailt gus Alba a riochdachadh aig Fèis Film Òigridh CIAK.



Àrd-sgoil Àird nam Murchan: Buannaichean Taghadh Eadar Nàiseanta FilmG. Ardnamurchan High School: Winners of FilmG International Choice Award



Àrd-sgoil Àird nam Murchan: Buannaichean Duais Ghàidhlig an Luchd-Ionnsachaidh. Ardnamurchan High School: Winners of Gaelic Learners Award



Sgoil Stafainn: Buannaichean Duais Roghainn an t-Sluaigh. Staffin School: Winners of People's Choice Award



Anndra Cuimeanach: Buannaiche Duais Ghàidhlig nam Fileantach. Anndra Cuimeanach: Winner of Gaelic Fluent Speakers Award

Highland haul at Film G 2020

Highland schools and pupils dominated the Film G awards held on Friday 14th February 2020 in Glasgow.



Sgoil a' Phluic: Buannaichean Riochdachadh as Fheàrr.
Plockton School: Winners of Best Production

'Fàilte don Eilean' was the People's Choice award won by Staffin Primary School on Skye.

Culloden Academy won the Best Film with their film 'Eilean nam Muc'.

Plockton High School in Wester Ross won the Best Production with their film 'An Corp' which is about murder and suspicion on the west coast.

'Siùbhal gu Sear' was the only film to pick up two awards in this year's competition featured in the Youth category and was made by Anndra Cuimeanach (a pupil of Gairloch High School). Siùbhal gu Sear sees Anndra travel the breadth of Scotland on two wheels within a day, and he was the recipient of Best Documentary and the Gaelic Award for Fluent Speakers.

Ardnamurchan High School's fluent Gaelic speaking class's film 'Reòite' won FilmG International Representative prize, meaning they get to go to Italy to represent Scotland at CIAK Junior Film Festival. The school's Gaelic learner's class film 'An Cuach, na h-luchraichean agus an Dron' won the prize for Gaelic Learners.



Acadamaidh Chùil Lodair: Buannaichean Film as Fheàrr.
Culloden Academy: Winners of Best Film



Anndra Cuimeanach: Buannaiche Film Aithriseach as Fheàrr.
Anndra Cuimeanach: Winner of Best Documentary

The future of Corran Ferry



Photos by The Highland Council

In recent years, a number of operational, financial and other challenges have emerged regarding the Corran Ferry service which present both short and long-term threats to the future sustainability and viability of the service.

Recognising this, the Council started work in mid-May 2019 to progress an outline business case, which will determine future proposals for capital investment in vessels, slipway structures, service delivery methods and future fares.

Key contacts have been established and essential consultation with Council Members, Community Groups and appropriate stakeholders including Caledonian Maritime Assets Limited (CMAL) and Transport Scotland is underway.

The project is focused on the immediate transport problems associated with the ferry service, and the actions required to ensure its future sustainability.

Basically the current vessels are reaching the end of their life and will need to be replaced before a bridge can ever be built as this is a the longer longer-term proposition.

Vessels and Slipways Analysis Using information provided in an options appraisal report (EDI Committee - 08/11/18) the project analysed the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of each of the shortlisted vessel and slipway options.

The conclusion was that retaining two vessels is an overly expensive model. This infrastructure

arrangement is unique for this scale of operation and is at odds with other ferry networks in Scotland.

A new larger roll-on/roll-off vessel, with a refit/relief second vessel secured from elsewhere will be the preferred vessel and slipways option. This will deliver economies of scale benefits and is in line with CMAL Ferries operated by Calmac.

The next step is to develop the preferred option prior to any procurement. We are taking advice from CMAL on their approach to tendering vessel design/slipways replacements and profiling the likely capital spend.

Procurement – Market Testing

As part of a Market Testing exercise we have recently contacted prospective contractors to give notice that a procurement opportunity for the ferry service may be coming forward.

The Highland Council, Hitrans and Highlands & Islands Enterprise are jointly funding an Option Development Study, which will include fixed link options as a longer-term proposition with the intention to submit it to Transport Scotland as part of the ongoing Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2). An interim update report was recently presented to the Lochaber Area Committee.

Splash and slide

Work to provide a new splash pad for Nairn begins on 30th March 2020.

The splash pad will be located on the site of the existing paddling pool on the Nairn Links, however it will provide a facility that is more accessible and can be open and enjoyed by children and adults for a longer period throughout the year.

The splash pad is a jointly funded project between Team Hamish/NICE, Nairn Common Good and The Highland Council and is the result of extensive engagement with the community in Nairn.

One recommendation of the Nairn Links Development Plan, this project is seen as phase 1 of the overall plan for the Nairn links area.

Cllr Tom Heggie, Chair of the Nairn and Nairnshire committee said:

"I am delighted that work on this new facility is beginning. This will be the first one of its kind in Highland and will be a fantastic development for the community."

Sam Hey of Team Hamish said:

"Susan and I are really excited about the prospect of this work finally starting. We have planned for this over a long period of time and want to thank everyone who contributed to the Team Hamish fund who have made this happen."

Contractor Ustigate will begin on site at the end of March with the works expected to be completed and in use by the end of July. Ustigate are an experienced provider of water play facilities and have installed more than 100 across the country.

Information boards providing visuals and further details of the works will be available for viewing in Nairn Community Centre from the week beginning 23rd March 2020. Updates on progress on the work will also be posted there.

The works will be project-managed by the Council's Property Service.

PROPOSED VISUALIZATION



Community Learning and Development

Senior leaders at The Highland Council have been praised in a new report for understanding and valuing a Community Learning and Development (CLD) approach in meeting Highland Outcome Improvement Plan priorities.

In a recent HMI report on Continuing Engagement of Community Learning and Development (CLD) in The Highland Council by Education Scotland inspectors, it was reported that leaders at all levels have “a shared commitment to strengthening the nine Community Partnerships.”

The report also recognised that community planning partners have identified a range of priority actions they need to take to build the role, effectiveness and sustainability of community planning arrangements across Highland.

It also praised learning and development in the community, saying: “across Highland highly effective and ambitious community organisations continue to enhance community life by delivering a wide range of services.”

The report noted the work of the Dingwall Fire Brigade’s Club, Cromarty Community Trust and High Life Highland’s detached youth work project. The Dingwall employability programme is another service supporting young people to become ready for work and gain appropriate levels of accreditation.

There were many other positives in the report, including praise around the thread between strategic planning and operational delivery, an example



of which was, the innovative House of Memories project, which auditors said delivers well against intended outcomes in the Highland Dementia policy. The project supports those caring for people living with dementia across Highland to use a bespoke digital app. This app helps them to feel more confident and equipped to support their family members and clients.

Auditors were encouraged by examples where partners make effective use of evaluation to assess progress for individual projects. It picked out the Growing2gether programme which supports young people to mentor children, includes a systematic approach to evaluation. This is supporting its roll out to schools across Highland.



The Highland Council recognises the importance of these reports which are critical in terms of insuring continuous development of service and highlighting areas for improvement.

The report highlighted a continuing challenge as to how partners deploy CLD resources, including staff time, to best support progress against shared priorities. It also found a need to review strategic aims for CLD and community empowerment to make sure they are achievable and realistic.

Inspectors also recognised that partners are increasing the opportunities for practitioners to meet, share ideas and learn from each other. The Highland Voluntary Youth Network is building capacity to engage in shared planning and self-evaluation amongst voluntary sector youth organisations.

In terms of areas for improvement, the report pin-pointed a need to clarify how existing and planned partnership structures and networks will provide a clear route-map to inform the provision of CLD. It said:

“Current structures do not yet enable strategic leaders to best meet their duties in regard to the planning and reporting of CLD provision.”

The Gathering Place

The additional works required to enhance the access arrangements to the My Ness art piece “The Gathering Place” and to enable the project to be completed are now fully funded.

The Inverness City Arts Working Group (ICArts) agreed to proceed to the construction phase of ‘The Gathering Place’ at a meeting held recently.

Following the report to Councillors at the City of Inverness Area Committee in November 2019, officers worked with Creative Scotland to close the funding gap which emerged following the changes to the original design in order to improve access requirements to the My Ness piece of art beyond the original specification which met with legal requirements.

The next phase will involve giving close care and attention to the natural environment and an ecological assessment will be undertaken, alongside liaison with the Ness District Fisheries Board.

The project team are also working closely with the Council’s tree officer to ensure that all necessary precautions are taken to protect the local environment. One mature tree is to be removed located adjacent to the Fisherman’s Hut and one on the opposing riverbank. The tree that is adjacent to the Fisherman’s Hut is in a poor condition and is being removed under a general tree management plan for the area. Otherwise, site clearance work will involve the clearance of undergrowth and shrubs.

A further update was provided to the ICArts Working Group on the siting of the Rest Space art project. Also as reported to City Committee in November, it has been agreed that the Rest Space will now be located as part of the WestLink



The Gathering Place artistic impression

Project and within the new parkland area currently under construction. Consents are now all in place and installation will begin in the coming months as this- part of the development progresses. The installation costs will be part of the Westlink Project budget.

Chair of the Working Group, Cllr Isabelle Mackenzie said:

“We are appreciative for the additional funding which allows for the My Ness art piece to go ahead and wish to thank Creative Scotland who have been fully supportive of the River Ness Art project programme throughout. We are also hugely appreciative for all the hard work the HC project team for getting us to this final stage and look forward to seeing work start on the installation, which is for use by members of public when enjoying our beautiful Riverscape”.



The Gathering Place artistic impression

Inverness Castle transformation



Photo by Ewen Weatherspoon

Photo from Am Baile

Following the move of the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service (SCTS) to the new Inverness Justice Centre at the end of March, The Highland Council is due to formally take ownership of the South Tower of the Inverness Castle building in May this year. This marks a significant milestone for Inverness Castle – Spirit of the Highlands, one of our key City Region Deal projects.

The project will bring about the transformation of the Castle to become a ‘must-see’ visitor attraction, drawing visitors to the Highlands, inspiring people – visitors and locals – to find out more about this part of the country and to explore all that it has to offer. When the transformation is complete, the Castle will be a gateway for Highland tourism and a vital step for the regeneration of Inverness city centre. It will support economic growth throughout the Highland area, inspiring people to visit all parts of the region.

Plans are being developed to capture video footage of the interior of the building and to make it available online to let people see how the castle looked prior to the start of the forthcoming building works. In addition, a series of events will follow to provide the opportunity for members of

the public to find out about the plans to develop the Castle and to keep up to date with the project’s progress.

An enabling works contract for the Castle is due to begin in early summer. The contract will involve demolition work, asbestos surveys, timber preservation surveys and structural checks. Hoardings are due to be put in place around the castle buildings in May and will remain in place for the duration of the both the enabling contract and main building contract, adjusted as necessary during the works.

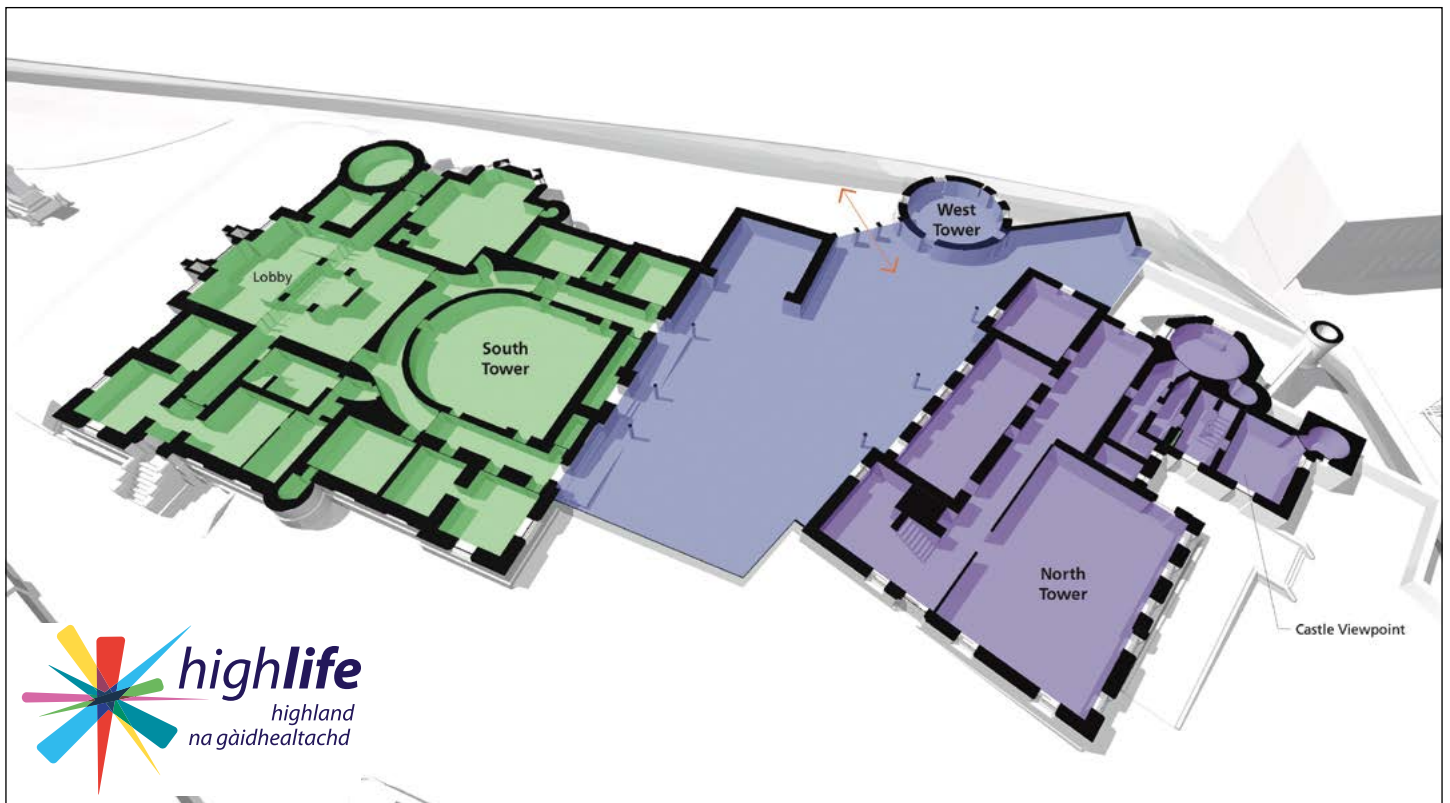
Applications for Listed Building Consent, Building Warrant, Demolition Warrant and Change of Use will soon be submitted. At the same time, our engineers have begun assessing potential energy solutions that may be used in this historic building, and landscape architects are considering how the castle surroundings will be improved to encourage people to spend time there in the future. The initial preparatory works will be followed by the main building contract, and a three year period has been programmed for this part to take into account planning requirements, liaison with



Photo by Ewen Weatherspoon

the regulatory authorities and so on that are anticipated for a building of this type. The tender for the main construction project is expected to begin in summer 2021, however, the exact timings will depend on the outcome of the initial investigations.

Please note that timings and events mentioned above may be subject to further change as the impact of coronavirus becomes clearer.



Staff and community engagement

Chief Executive Donna Manson will be continuing visits to Highland towns and villages in 2020 as part of an ongoing programme of staff and community engagement.

Engagement visits started last year when the Chief Executive visited the Drummuie Offices and met with staff across a range of services.



That visit was followed by a day-long trip across Lochaber. The first port of call was Fort William marina, where the Chief Executive listened to local ideas for community investment and how the local community is transforming the waterfront in Fort William.



From there she and Budget Leader Cllr Alister Mackinnon visited staff at the newly-refurbished Charles Kennedy building.

Staff revealed the success of the Fort William office's gardening club with input from the local Men's Shed, which has helped improve the wellbeing of staff and provided an excellent meeting place in relaxing surroundings.



The Chief Executive was delighted to see better integration of staff since the move to an open plan office. Lochaber is an area where the Council is piloting a flexible trades workforce in Lochaber to make best use of in-house resources and reduce outsourcing.

Donna and Alister then headed south to Corran Ferry to hear from ferry passengers and staff. They had conversations with visiting bikers and various passengers and discussed this valuable service and the fare structure. They also met with Corran Ferry foremen Donald Dixon and Alan McCowan, who both said they thoroughly enjoyed the part they played in the crucial service, as well as the challenges faced. New ticketing machines were discussed, as was the need to plan for the future, given the age of the current fleet.

During the trip they met with representatives of Ardnamurchan's five Community Councils. They highlight how the Corran Ferry represented a lifeline for the local community and the impact of log lorries tour buses and campervans who could be paying more. In addition they expressed a desire to be part of future discussions around fares and future plans and are willing to work with The Highland Council in a positive and constructive way.

That led to the Corran Ferry project manager Murray Bain writing to all five Community Councils and offering them each a place on the new steering group, which will look at future fares and sustainability of the service.

The very latest on the Corran Ferry can be found in our article on page 10.



The visit included meetings with a number of schools in the region. The first was Strontian Primary, which is a campus model, co-located with the High School.



Donna and Cllr Mackinnon visited Acharacle Primary, a beautiful, state-of-the-art school, which left a great impression on both the Chief Executive and the Budget Leader. They met with Head Teacher Lyndsay

Bradley who highlighted that the school is a self-heating building with gardens outside each classroom. It presents an excellent model of Gaelic medium immersion. Their final school visit saw the Chief Executive and Budget Leader meet with Cluster Head for Mallaig ASG, Martin Sullivan.



Donna, Cllr Mackinnon and Executive Chief Officer (ECO) for Finance and Resources Liz Denovan, visited Community Services staff in Sutherland on Thursday 26th September. The two groups of staff they met included roads, waste, housing and lighting staff with useful discussion on challenges with resources, plant, equipment, logistics, recruitment and training.



Donna and Cllr Mackinnon had time to visit the Mallaig harbour and met with the Mallaig Harbour Board, who were holding one of their regular meetings. They listened to members talk about their plans to extend the infrastructure at the harbour, as well as their views on car parking. The day ended with a well-earned fresh fish supper from a local fish and chip shop.

The Chief Executive went on to visit Lairg depot with interim roads manager Joanne Sutherland and Communications and Resilience Manager Ruth Cleland.

An action plan has been drawn up from the visit to respond to some of the issues raised.



The Executive Chief Officer (ECO) for Communities and Customer Services, Carron McDiarmid and Head of Environmental & Amenity Services, Andy Summers visited a number of towns in Skye late last year as part of the ongoing programme of visits.

The discussions with staff locally are part of the senior team's commitment to connect with staff better to find out about local operations and to hear their ideas for change.

The pair visited the Broadford depot to meet staff roads worker Angus Fraser, litter patroller Stefan Szoke and Depot Manager Brendan Henry. Carron and Andy heard about the team's work and they also listened as Brendan, Angus and Stefan highlighted areas which might help them and their teams further improve the services they deliver to the public on Skye.

This included our arrangements for fleet, staff cover and protective clothing.

From there they visited Sconser Quarry, where they met with Quarry Manager David Jamieson.



He highlighted the work carried out at the quarry and stressed the importance of succession planning, with workers due to retire in the not too distant future. He advised Carron and Andy that at least one modern apprentice would really benefit operations at the quarry.

David said that The Highland Council run quarry produces supplies for roads infrastructure and buildings. He also said that in an average year around 50,000 tonnes of material leaves the quarry.

Next on the journey was a visit to the Portree depot and a look around the waste management facilities with Morag Greenshields, Waste Management Officer (Ops). This provided both Carron and Andy with an opportunity to meet staff at the depot and hear about their work, as well as provide an opportunity for staff to highlight areas for improvement.

Later staff at the Council offices in Portree shared views on a number of things including how to improve staff communications and staff development/appraisal and how we could make better use of all our assets, including with our partners.



Chief Executive Donna Manson visited Skye in November meeting with staff, schools, community groups and local ward members.

Also visiting Skye, were interim Head of Education Nicky Grant and Executive Chief Officer (ECO) for Infrastructure and Environment, Malcolm MacLeod who will be the lead officer for Skye.



Photos by The Highland Council

Your Cash, Your Caithness

Our thanks goes to everyone who came along to take part in the recent Your Cash Your Caithness participatory budgeting event to cast their vote for their favourite local projects.

Eleven out of the twenty-five projects bidding for £10,000 community funding, of which £9,465 comprised of funds handed over by the former Caithness partnership, were successfully voted for by just over 115 people who registered to vote on the day.

Applicants were allocated a 3 minute slot to sell their project with a further 2 minutes allocated to allow any questions from the audience. The event was compared by the Caithness Civic Leader and Wick and East Caithness Councillor Willie Mackay.

Councillor Mackay said:

"I was really pleased and delighted to see so many people turn out to take part in the sixth "Your Cash, Your Caithness" participatory budgeting event. We had 25 groups delivering presentations to a community audience, who then voted for them on their merits. The event handed out £10,000 to local good causes.

"I firmly believe handing decision making to the community it is a great way to support community empowerment and helps build community cohesion. This event was an opportunity for Caithness groups to meet new people and find out what is happening locally.

I was heartened by the diverse spread of applications received for this event and I was not disappointed by the standard of the presentations delivered by all the Groups on the day.

"This process is all about handing decision-making back to the community and its part of our localism agenda, which has seen devolving of further powers from the Highland Council to Caithness.

"Congratulations to the winning groups; I look forward to seeing how you use the money and my sincere thanks to all who made the day such a success."



The successful bids voted for by the audience are:

**North Highland Cancer
Information Support Centre
£1,000**

**The John O'Groats Mill Trust
£1,000**

**Caithness Macular Support Group
£1,000**

**Thurso Community Café
£1,000**

**Bower Busy Bees Early
Learning Centre
£1,000**

**Caithness Broch Project
£961**

**Caithness Street Pastors
£1,000**

**No Limits Caithness
£990**

**Thurso Community
Development Trust
£1,000**

**Northern Stars THS 2020
£500**

**Home-Start Caithness
£549**

Energy saving milestone

Work to install solar panels to supply key buildings across The Highland Council's non-domestic estate has reached a significant milestone, with completed sites estimated to generate over 500,000kWh of energy a year.

This generation is estimated to deliver a carbon saving of over 128,000kg CO2 equivalent a year. This roughly equates to:

- 1,200 trips from Thurso to Edinburgh an average (non-electric) car;
- Around 25,000 hours in an average electric shower;
- Planting 50 acres of new forest;
- 16.3 million smartphones charged.

With 14 sites now complete, The Highland Council is part way through Phase 3 of six in its roll out of solar panels across key non-domestic buildings. With latter phases aiming to cover greater numbers of sites, future installs could potentially triple this annual generation figure and associated Carbon saving.

The full programme is a £2.3m investment in solar technology across the non-domestic estate, committed in 2018. It is designed to combat energy price increases, reduce energy spend and reduce carbon emissions. The programme is self-financing, meaning the money the programme saves more than covers all delivery costs.

The work also makes up part of the Council's wider £7m 'Salix Recycling Fund' – a pot



of money match-funded by an interest-free loan to the Council for energy efficiency projects, funded by Scottish Government through Salix Finance Ltd. Highland Council currently operate the largest Recycling Fund in Scotland and the largest for a local authority in the UK.

Councillor Trish Robertson, Climate Change Panel Chair, said:

"I am delighted to see the Energy and Renewables programme reach this milestone. The Council's declaration of a climate and ecological emergency, and its aspiration to reach a net zero Highland by 2025, represents a significant challenge for the organisation, but also opens up exciting opportunities for real organisational and regional development.

"This Programme is a great example – it is challenging work that requires significant

investment, but it provides a host of benefits. As well as the significant carbon savings, the Programme has financial benefits for the Council, including greater stability and control, and reassessing how we use and invest in our assets."

Finlay MacDonald, Head of Property Services and Project Sponsor for the Energy and Renewables Programme, added:

"Annual kilowatt-hour savings of over half a million is a significant milestone for this project and a key part of our wider long-term strategy to help reduce our carbon emissions and mitigate against increasing energy prices by investing in renewable energy and energy efficiency measures across the Council estate.

"This ambitious programme is vital in delivering on our vision for a sustainable Highland, both environmentally and financially."



Gaelic Club/Club Gàidhlig

Club Gàidhlig (Gaelic Club) a creative after school club run in Gaelic was recently established at Plockton primary. The monthly Gaelic Club currently takes place out-with the school hours twice a month on Tuesdays between 3:30pm - 5pm.

The Club has been set up by The Highland Council Gaelic Team in partnership with Plockton primary.

Ms Sarah Mary who is the Gaelic Club Leader said,

"The Gaelic medium pupils from Plockton primary who attend the Gaelic club participate in crafting activities through the medium of Gaelic. Whilst gaining creative skills the children also have fun with their Gaelic medium peers and this also enhances their language usage as well as increasing their language learning ability."

Mrs Roslyn Hay, a parent whose children attend the Club said,

"As a parent at Plockton primary whose children attend the Gaelic after school Club; My boys have really enjoyed this club. It's fun, informal and has helped bring out their creative side whilst allowing them to use their Gaelic language skills in a different setting."



Doors officially opened on extension of Ullapool Primary to include a nursery

Last month the doors were officially opened on a £1m extension to Ullapool Primary School which includes the creation of a new nursery.

The nursery extension includes two new classrooms, one for English medium with a capacity of 15 and the other for Gaelic medium with a capacity of 30. There is also a new reception area, a work area for staff and a new staff room. It also features a brand new Additional Support Needs room.

Three outdoor play areas have also been created which provide a secure outdoor space for the children, with free flow from the classrooms to these areas. There are play parks for each classroom and a shared play park. There is also a canopy outside to provide cover in inclement weather and a new outdoor lighting so that children can enjoy fresh air even at dusk.

Speaking at the official opening - Chairman of the



Highland Council Education Committee, Cllr John Finlayson, said:

"I am delighted at the opening of this fantastic facility that will support the whole school community in so many different ways."

"I am sure everyone in Ullapool and the surrounding area will also be happy to see the completion of this exciting project and everyone involved should be congratulated on reaching the completion stage."



How do we compare: Benchmarking

What is the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF)?

All 32 Scottish Councils are required to publish a set of performance indicators using the LGBF each year. This ensures that councils report standard information on the services they provide to local communities. The indicators were selected through a wide consultation process to cover major service areas.

Of the 89 LGBF indicators, The Highland Council is in the top quartile (ranked 1-8)

for 19 indicators and in the bottom quartile (ranked 25-32) for 24 indicators. It should be noted that there are a wide range of factors that influence the performance of these indicators including geography, service delivery models and budget priorities.

Almost all the performance indicators have targets that we are trying to achieve.

Our current performance (2018/19 unless otherwise stated) for each indicator is shown using the following symbols:

Performance Targets

-  **On Target**
-  **Within performance threshold**
-  **No Significant Progress**

Indicator Type

-  **Quality**
-  **Cost**

There are 27 indicators that we consider to be Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). 21 of these are from the LGBF, and 6 are locally defined indicators. These are highlighted on the next few pages. 17 (63%) of these indicators are performing on target, 3 (11%) indicate 'Within Performance Threshold' in performance, and for 7 (26%) there is 'No Significant Progress' in improving performance.

A video on the performance of our Key Performance Indicators can be viewed online: www.bit.ly/HighlandKPI2020

Children's Services

CHN1 - CHN23

CHN1



Spend on primary schools
£ per pupil

Highland £5,292



Family: £5,260
Scotland: £5,250
Target: Scottish Average



Ranked **17** of **32**

CHN2



Spend on secondary schools
£ per pupil

Highland £7,104



Family: £7,212
Scotland: £7,185
Target: Scottish Average



Ranked **18** of **32**

CHN3



Spend on pre-school education
£ per pre-school pupil


Highland £4,778



Family: £4,798
Scotland: £5,070
Target: Scottish Average




Ranked **16** of **32**

KPI **CHN4** 


Secondary school pupils achieving 5 plus awards at SCQF level 5


%

Highland 59%



Family: 63%
Scotland: 63%
Target: Rank 18


 Ranked **24** of **32**

KPI **CHN5** 


Secondary school pupils achieving 5 plus awards at SCQF level 6


%

Highland 30%



Family: 34%
Scotland: 35%
Target: Rank 20


 Ranked **24** of **32**

KPI **CHN6** 


Secondary school pupils from deprived areas achieving 5 plus awards at SCQF level 5


%

Highland 35%



Family: 40%
Scotland: 44%
Target: Rank 24


 Ranked **22** of **32**

KPI **CHN7** 


Secondary school pupils from deprived areas achieving 5 plus awards at SCQF level 6

%

Highland 12%



Family: 15%
Scotland: 18%
Target: Rank 24

 Ranked **22** of **32**

CHN8a

Spend on residential accommodation for 'Looked After Children' £ per child per week

Highland £3,379




Family: £3,268
Scotland: £3,485
Target: Scottish Average

 Ranked **14** of **32**

CHN8b

Spend on providing fostering/family placements for 'Looked After Children' £ per child per week

Highland £197



Family: £303
Scotland: £328
Target: Scottish Average


 Ranked **1** of **32**

CHN9


'Looked After Children' cared for in foster/family placements


%

Highland 83.5%



Family: 86.3%
Scotland: 89.7%
Target: TBC


 Ranked **26** of **32**

CHN10 


Resident satisfaction with local schools

%

Highland 75.7%



Family: 74.5%
Scotland: 71.8%
Target: Scottish Average


 Ranked **16** of **32**

KPI **CHN11**


Pupils entering positive destinations after school

%

Highland 96.0%



Family: 94.9%
Scotland: 94.4%
Target: Rank 8


 Ranked **7** of **32**

KPI **CHN12a** 

Overall attainment


Average tariff score

Highland 792



Family: 852
Scotland: 892
Target: Rank 19

 Ranked **28** of **32**


CHN12b 

Attainment


SIMD Quintile 1


Average tariff score

Highland 492



Family: 577
Scotland: 625
Target: Rank 24

 Ranked **24** of **32**


CHN12c 

Attainment


SIMD Quintile 2


Average tariff score

Highland 575



Family: 658
Scotland: 740
Target: Rank 24

 Ranked **29** of **32**


CHN12d 

Attainment


SIMD Quintile 3


Average tariff score

Highland 789



Family: 825
Scotland: 872
Target: Rank 18

 Ranked **27** of **32**


CHN12e 

Attainment


SIMD Quintile 4


Average tariff score

Highland 907



Family: 968
Scotland: 1,013
Target: Rank 24

 Ranked **26** of **32**


CHN12f 

Attainment


SIMD Quintile 5

Average tariff score

Highland 1,006



Family: 1,088
Scotland: 1,193
Target: Rank 22

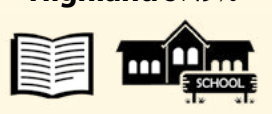
 Ranked **27** of **32**

CHN13a


Primary pupils achieving expected level in literacy

%

Highland 57.9%



Family: 70.9%
Scotland: 72.3%
Target: TBC

 Ranked **32** of **32**

CHN13b

Primary pupils achieving expected level in numeracy %

Highland 67.4%

Family: 77.0%
Scotland: 79.1%
Target: TBC

Ranked **32** of 32

CHN14a

Primary pupils literacy attainment gap %

Highland 31.1%

Family: 23.5%
Scotland: 20.7%
Target: TBC

Ranked **29** of 32

CHN14b

Primary pupils numeracy attainment gap %

Highland 25.2%

Family: 21.3%
Scotland: 16.8%
Target: TBC

Ranked **28** of 32

CHN17

Children meeting developmental milestones (27-30 months) %

Highland 63.7%

Family: 76.0%
Scotland: 57.1%
Target: TBC

2017/18 Figures

Ranked **25** of 32

CHN18

Funded early years provision rated good or better %

Highland 93.9%

Family: 89.3%
Scotland: 90.6%
Target: 92%

Ranked **13** of 32

KPI **CHN19a**

School attendance rate %

Highland 92.8%

Family: 93.3%
Scotland: 93.0%
Target: Rank 24

2018-19 Figures

Ranked **21** of 32

KPI **CHN19b**

School attendance rate for Looked After Children %

Highland 91.1%

Family: 90.5%
Scotland: 91.0%
Target: TBC

2016-17 Figures

Ranked **18** of 32

CHN20a

School exclusion rate per 1,000 pupils

Highland 22.7

Family: 26.3
Scotland: 26.8
Target: TBC

2016-17 Figures

Ranked **17** of 32

CHN20b

School exclusion rate for Looked After Children per 1,000 Looked After Children

Highland 108.8

Family: N/A
Scotland: 80.0
Target: TBC

2016-17 Figures

Ranked **20** of 32

CHN21

16-19 year olds participating in learning, training or work %

Highland 92.2%

Family: 92.8%
Scotland: 91.6%
Target: Scottish Average

Ranked **15** of 32

CHN22

Child protection re-registrations within 18 months %

Highland 6.8%

Family: 5.4%
Scotland: 6.1%
Target: Rank 8

2017/18 Figures

Ranked **18** of 32

CHN23

Looked After Children with more than one placement last year %

Highland 27.6%

Family: 23.0%
Scotland: 20.6%
Target: Scottish Average

2017/18 Figures

Ranked **25** of 32

KPI

Average number of Looked After Children accommodated outwith Highland

2017/18: 34
2018/19: 39
Target: 34

Corporate Asset

C-AST1 - C-AST2

KPI **C-AST1**

Council buildings suitable for their current use %

Highland 67.6%

Family: 79.1%
Scotland: 82.1%
Target: Family Average

Ranked **31** of 32

C-AST2

Council buildings in a satisfactory condition %

Highland 82.4%

Family: 84.5%
Scotland: 87.2%
Target: Family Average

Ranked **25** of 32

Corporate Services

CORP1 - CORP8

CORP1

Council's total running costs spent on administrative support %

Highland 7.6%



Family: 5.1%
Scotland: 4.4%
Target: Scottish Average

Ranked 31 of 32

CORP3b

Women in top 5% earners in the Council %

Highland 50%



Family: 46%
Scotland: 56%
Target: Scottish Average

Ranked 25 of 32

CORP3c

Gender pay gap in the Council %

Highland 5.8%



Family: 7.0%
Scotland: 4.0%
Target: Scottish Average

Ranked 24 of 32

CORP4

Council spend on collecting council tax £ per home
Highland £7.69



Family: £11.43
Scotland: £6.92
Target: Scottish Average

Ranked 21 of 32

KPI CORP6a

Sickness absence for teachers
Average number of days per teacher

Highland 7.11 days



Family: 7.06 days
Scotland: 6.21 days
Target: Rank 23

Ranked 24 of 32

KPI CORP6b

Sickness absence in the Council?
Average number of days per employee (non-teachers)

Highland 10.50 days



Family: 11.52 days
Scotland: 11.49 days
Target: 10.6 days

Ranked 10 of 32

KPI CORP7

Council efficiency at collecting council tax %

Highland 96.3%



Family: 96.7%
Scotland: 96.0%
Target: Scottish Average

Ranked 16 of 32

CORP8

Council efficiency at paying invoices on time %

Highland 95.7%



Family: 91.2%
Scotland: 92.7%
Target: 95%

Ranked 10 of 32

Housing Services

HSN1b - HSN5

KPI HSN1b

Rent owed to the council due to arrears (gross) %

Highland 4.9%



Family: 7.1%
Scotland: 7.3%
Target: under 5%

Ranked 5 of 32

HSN2

Rent lost due to empty properties %

Highland 0.8%



Family: 1.0%
Scotland: 1.0%
Target: 1.1%

Ranked 7 of 32

HSN3

Quality and standard of housing provided by the Council* %

Highland 95.5%



Family: 95.7%
Scotland: 94.3%
Target: Scottish Average

*Measured by the Scottish Housing Quality Standard

Ranked 15 of 32

HSN4b

Time to complete non-emergency repairs
average number of days

Highland 7.2 days



Family: 8.8 days
Scotland: 7.8 days
Target: 6.6 days

Ranked 12 of 32

HSN5

Energy efficiency of housing provided by the Council %

Highland 95.5%



Family: 96.6%
Scotland: 97.5%
Target: Scottish Average

Ranked 21 of 32

KPI

Average time to re-let homes (days)

2017/18: 36.6

2018/19: 36.8

Target: 38.0

Homelessness case duration (days)

2017/18: 44

2018/19: 48

Target: 41

Adult Social Care Services

SW1 - SW8

SW1

Council spend on care to support older people to live at home
£ per hour

Highland £29.46



Family: £25.29
Scotland: £24.67
Target: TBC

£ Ranked **25** of 32

KPI

SW2

People that need support choose how their needs will be met
%

Highland 6.5%



Family: 5.1%
Scotland: 7.3%
Target: Rank 9

👍 Ranked **7** of 32

KPI

SW3

Older people with long term care needs supported to remain at home
%

Highland 55.6%



Family: 60.2%
Scotland: 61.0%
Target: Rank 27

👍 Ranked **26** of 32

SW4b

Adults supported at home agree services had an impact in improving or maintaining their quality of life
%

Highland 85.7%



Family: 78.1%
Scotland: 80.0%
Target: Rank 8

👍 Ranked **4** of 32

SW4c

Adults supported at home who agree that they are supported to live as independently as possible
%

Highland 86.4%



Family: 81.2%
Scotland: 81.1%
Target: TBC

👍 Ranked **2** of 32

SW4d

Adults supported at home who agree they had a say in how their support was provided
%

Highland 79.2%



Family: 74.4%
Scotland: 75.6%
Target: TBC

👍 Ranked **8** of 32

SW4e

Carers who feel supported to continue in their caring role
%

Highland 37.5%



Family: 35.7%
Scotland: 36.6%
Target: TBC

👍 Ranked **17** of 32

SW5

Council spend on residential care for older people
£ per week, per resident

Highland £514



Family: £438
Scotland: £381
Target: TBC

£ Ranked **29** of 32

SW6

Rate of readmission to hospital within 28 days
per 1,000 discharges

Highland 113



Family: 100
Scotland: 103
Target: TBC

👍 Ranked **25** of 32

SW7

Care services graded "good" or "better"
%

Highland 86%



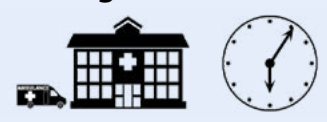
Family: 79%
Scotland: 82%
Target: TBC

👍 Ranked **6** of 32

SW8

Time people spend in hospital when they are ready for discharge
Days per 1,000 aged 75+

Highland 1,248



Family: 816
Scotland: 793
Target: TBC

👍 Ranked **28** of 32

Culture and Leisure Services

C&L1 - C&L5d

KPI

C&L1

Council spend on sports and leisure facilities
£ per visit

Highland £1.64



Family: £2.37
Scotland: £2.62
Target: Rank 8

£ Ranked **7** of 32

KPI

C&L2

Council spend on libraries
£ per visit

Highland £1.58



Family: £2.79
Scotland: £2.05
Target: Rank 9

£ Ranked **9** of 32

KPI

C&L3

Council spend on museums and galleries
£ per visit

Highland £1.49



Family: £4.46
Scotland: £3.48
Target: Rank 16

£ Ranked **4** of 32


C&L4 

Council spend on parks and open spaces
£ per 1,000 people
Highland £1,303




Family: £15,232
Scotland: £20,174
Target: Scottish Average

£ Ranked **3** of **32**

C&L5a 

Satisfaction with local libraries
%
Highland 70.4%




Family: 71.0%
Scotland: 72.4%
Target: Scottish Average

👍 Ranked **24** of **32**


C&L5b 

Satisfaction with local parks and open spaces
%
Highland 78.9%

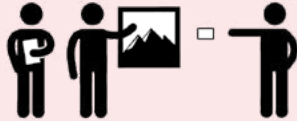


Family: 77.6%
Scotland: 84.8%
Target: Scottish Average

👍 Ranked **27** of **32**

C&L5c 

Satisfaction with local museums and galleries
%
Highland 57.4%



Family: 62.3%
Scotland: 69.3%
Target: Scottish Average

👍 Ranked **24** of **32**

C&L5d 

Satisfaction with local leisure facilities
%
Highland 69.9%




Family: 69.1%
Scotland: 71.4%
Target: Scottish Average


👍 Ranked **19** of **32**

Economic Development

ECON1 - ECON10

ECON1 

Unemployed people assisted into work by the Council
%
Highland 4.1%



Family: 9.5%
Scotland: 12.6%
Target: Scottish Average

👍 Ranked **29** of **32**


ECON2 

Cost per planning application
£
Highland £2,650




Family: £4,086
Scotland: £4,439
Target: Scottish Average

£ Ranked **3** of **32**


KPI ECON3 

Average time per Planning Application
weeks
Highland 10.6




Family: 9.2
Scotland: 9.1
Target: Scottish Average

👍 Ranked **24** of **32**


KPI ECON4 

Council spend to local small and medium sized enterprises
%
Highland 43.6%




Family: 38.0%
Scotland: 28.7%
Target: Rank 8

👍 Ranked **3** of **32**

ECON5 

Number of Business Gateway start-ups
per 10,000 population
Highland 11.89



Family: 19.51
Scotland: 16.70
Target: Scottish Average

👍 Ranked **31** of **32**

ECON6 

Council spend on Economic Development and Tourism?
£ per 1,000 people
Highland £63,866



Family: £108,516
Scotland: £102,086
Target: Scottish Average

£ Ranked **18** of **32**


ECON7 

People earning less than the living wage
%
Highland 20.8%




Family: 24.6%
Scotland: 19.4%
Target: Scottish Average

👍 Ranked **12** of **32**


KPI ECON8 

Properties receiving superfast broadband
%
Highland 75%




Family: 76%
Scotland: 92%
Target: 80%

👍 Ranked **30** of **32**

ECON9 

How many town centre commercial units are vacant
%
Highland 3.7%



Family: 7.2%
Scotland: 10.0%
Target: Scottish Average

👍 Ranked **2** of **32**

ECON10 

Development land allocated for employment purposes is immediately available
%
Highland 12.7%



Family: 49.3%
Scotland: 37.4%
Target: Scottish Average

👍 Ranked **26** of **32**

KPI

Businesses supported
by Council and
Business Gateway

2017/18: 1,191

2018/19: 1,802

Target: 1,400

Environmental Services

ENV1a - ENV7b

ENV1a

Council spend on
refuse collection (net)
£ per premise
Highland £48.63



Family: £57.94
Scotland: £67.45
Target: Scottish Average

£ Ranked 4 of 32

ENV2a

Council spend on
waste disposal (net)
£ per premise
Highland £85.40



Family: £111.24
Scotland: £97.29
Target: Scottish Average

£ Ranked 9 of 32

ENV3a

Council spend on
street cleaning
£ per 1,000 people
Highland £3,728



Family: £10,173
Scotland: £14,880
Target: Scottish Average

£ Ranked 1 of 32

KPI ENV3c

Cleanliness of my
local streets
%
Highland 95.6%



Family: 96.2%
Scotland: 92.8%
Target: Scottish Average

👍 Ranked 7 of 32

ENV4a

Council spend maintaining the
condition of my roads
£ per kilometre
Highland £6,560



Family: £5,647
Scotland: £9,417
Target: Scottish Average

£ Ranked 8 of 32

ENV4b

Local A class roads
in need of repair
%
Highland 29.3%



Family: 30.7%
Scotland: 30.0%
Target: Scottish Average

👍 Ranked 22 of 32

ENV4c

Local B class roads
in need of repair
%
Highland 36.3%



Family: 37.6%
Scotland: 35.7%
Target: Scottish Average

👍 Ranked 24 of 32

ENV4d

Local C class roads
in need of repair
%
Highland 41.5%

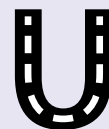


Family: 38.8%
Scotland: 36.3%
Target: Scottish Average

👍 Ranked 25 of 32

ENV4e

Local unclassified roads
in need of repair
%
Highland 42.3%



Family: 43.6%
Scotland: 38.3%
Target: Scottish Average

👍 Ranked 23 of 32

ENV5a

Council spend on trading standards,
money advice, and citizen advice
£ per 1,000 people
Highland £2,573



Family: £8,740
Scotland: £5,890
Target: Scottish Average

£ Ranked 2 of 32

ENV5b

Council spend on
environmental health
£ per 1,000 people
Highland £17,564



Family: £21,106
Scotland: £14,994
Target: Scottish Average

£ Ranked 24 of 32

KPI ENV6

Household waste recycled
%
Highland 42.7%



Family: 30.6%
Scotland: 44.7%
Target: Scottish Average

👍 Ranked 23 of 32

ENV7a

Satisfaction with local
refuse collection
%
Highland 86.8%



Family: 81.4%
Scotland: 76.3%
Target: Scottish Average

👍 Ranked 4 of 32

ENV7b

Satisfaction with local
street cleanliness
%
Highland 69.9%



Family: 70.0%
Scotland: 66.3%
Target: Scottish Average

👍 Ranked 13 of 32

KPI

Street lighting energy consumption (kWh)

2017/18: 14,178,050

2018/19: 13,734,725

Target: 15,424,654

Road network to be considered for maintenance

2017/18: 38.8%

2018/19: 38.6%

Target: 38.9%

What did our survey tell us?

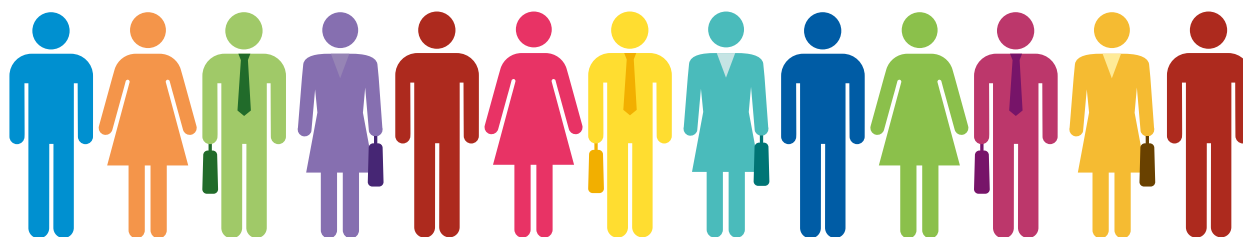
The Highland Council's annual Performance and Attitudes survey is used to better understand levels of satisfaction with Council services.

Every year we survey members of our Citizens' Panel. This group of residents is randomly selected and is designed to be representative of the adult population in Highland.

This year we received 1,137 responses from a possible 2,593 panel members providing a 44% response rate. A selection of the key results are provided.

Overall satisfaction with Council services

63% of the panel say they were satisfied overall with Council services in 2018/19, the same as in 2017/18.



Overall satisfaction with Council services

73%
2015/16

73%
2016/17

63%
2017/18

63%
2018/19

Council qualities

We asked questions on the qualities people feel are important about their Council.

We have used these to better understand what matters to people about how their Council behaves as well as what it achieves. Results in this section include:

- The most important quality that the panel want the Council to demonstrate is that it "Maintains good quality local services". Following this, the panel want the Council to provide value for money, and to listen to local people. These top three most important qualities are the same as in the previous two years.
- 51% of the panel believe the Council meets or exceeds their general expectations, (57% the previous year).

Quality as ranked in order of importance by respondents in 2018 survey	Respondents mentioning quality in their top 5 (%)		
	2017 %	2018 %	2019 %
1. Maintains good quality local services	75	78	76
2. Provides value for money	57	57	55
3. Listens to local people	54	57	55
4. Cares for the environment	47	51	39
5. Treats all residents fairly	35	38	38

The panel were asked whether they felt the Council met a number of qualities. More people agreed than disagreed that The Highland Council is:

- Approachable;
- Helpful;
- Maintains good quality local services;
- Cares for the environment;
- Treats all residents fairly.

The qualities that the survey respondents felt most strongly the Council was not meeting were:

- Involving people in how it spends money
- Represents your views; and
- Is efficient.

Community Life

The panel were asked their views on life in their communities. Key results included:

73% feel that the Council has strengthened the profile of the Gaelic language to a great or some extent (75% in 2017/18).

Community safety - 94% of respondents consider the area within 15 minutes' walk of their home to be 'very' or 'fairly' safe compared to 96% the year before.

Community safety - the top three areas of concern remain the same as in previous years. 80% are concerned about road safety, 69% about alcohol abuse, and 65% about drug misuse.

When asked about their awareness of the impact that hate incidents or crimes have on people in Highland, 82% said they were aware (78% in 2017/18) with 18% saying they were not aware (22% in 2017/18).

82% agree that Highland should do everything it can to get rid of all types of prejudice. This is a notable increase from 67% when the question was first asked in 2011.

Council Services

There are eight Council services that 85% or more of respondents say they use:

- Refuse/bin collection (98%)
- Road repairs & potholes (98%)
- Recycling facilities (97%)
- Winter roads maintenance (97%)
- Street cleaning (92%)
- Pavement maintenance (91%)
- Street lighting (91%)
- Grass cutting (87%)

The top three most important services for the public are: road repairs and potholes; winter road maintenance; and refuse/ bin collection. This table highlights the ten most important services to respondents:

Importance of services to respondents - appearance in respondents' top five					
Services	2015 %	2016 %	2017 %	2018 %	2019 %
Road repairs and pot holes	63	66	55	70	71
Winter road maintenance	50	43	42	49	48
Refuse/bin collection	45	26	27	24	29
Primary education	21	23	24	25	27
Recycling facilities	28	18	15	14	25
Public parks and other open spaces	20	24	21	24	23
Secondary education	17	21	19	20	20
Public toilets	n/a	n/a	n/a	13	19
Pavement maintenance	15	14	10	15	18
Street cleaning	14	10	13	15	16

Survey respondents were also asked about their satisfaction with Council services. The highest levels of satisfaction were with libraries, and the lowest levels of satisfaction were with road repairs and potholes.

Net satisfaction (%)		Net satisfaction (%)	
Service	2019 %	Service	2019 %
Libraries	82	Services to reduce offending	-3
Walking routes e.g. Great Glen Way	78	Pavement maintenance	-5
Residential homes for disabled/elderly people	73	Planning for future land use (Local Plan)	-12
Swimming pools	71	Public toilets	-31
Recycling facilities	70	Road repairs and potholes	-69

Net satisfaction is calculated by subtracting the percentage of people dissatisfied with a service from those that are satisfied with it.

Using our online services

We also ask questions to understand the panel's views on overall satisfaction with their online experience at the Council's website:

www.highland.gov.uk

Overall 67% said they were very or fairly satisfied with online services compared to 74% the year before.

In relation to questions on the quality of online services:

- 78% said they would use online services again (78% in 2018);
- 67% agreed that online services were easy to use (74% in 2018);
- 70% said they were able to find the online services they needed (76% in 2018);
- 57% agreed that online services were quick to complete (67% in 2018);
- 60% agreed that online services were easy to find (71% in 2018).

Perceptions of Young People

A new set of questions were asked in the survey which were developed with the Highland Youth Convener to help better understand perceptions of young people.

- 58% of the panel felt 'to some' or 'to a great extent' the Council supports and represents the views of young people.

The panel were also asked for their views on how young people positively contribute to their community:

	(%)		
	Yes	No	Don't know
As consumers	65	7	28
As part of the workforce	59	12	29
As local service users	57	8	34
Through arts and culture	48	12	40
Through volunteering and charitable giving	47	12	41
As positive role models	40	14	46
By participating in decision making	25	26	50

Involving Communities

This is a developing set of questions around community engagement, participation and localism.

Results from this section include:

When asked to define their community, the most popular answers selected by the panel were: my village (42%); my street/ immediate neighbourhood (42%); Highland (40%); and my town (36%).

60% say they volunteer in the community by helping a neighbour, family or friend with 42% saying they volunteer through an organised group or club.

75% feel they have no or not very much influence over decision making in their communities.

The main reasons given for not having an influence were: 'Public bodies don't listen to community views' (41%); 'I don't think this would make a difference' (34%); and 'Not enough time' (28%).

58% say they would like to be very or fairly involved in decision-making in their area.

63% felt that their community could become more involved in providing the services that they and their community need.

The majority of the panel were aware of their local community council (74%), and 22% had been in contact with their community council over the past 12 months.

The panel were asked about the Council's approach to participatory budgeting. 35% of the panel were aware that we are developing this approach. If a participatory budgeting event was happening in their community, 66% said they would want to be involved by putting forward ideas for new projects, and 80% by choosing projects they liked the most.

72% of the people who responded also said they would be interested in community discussions about how local services are provided and making choices within budget limits.

Best Value Assurance Report

A national audit report has highlighted the Council's clear strategic vision and the increased pace of change to ensure long term financial sustainability, accountability and ambition.

The audit was carried out during 2019 and was published in January 2020 having examined the period since 2010. Councils have a statutory duty to deliver Best Value by demonstrating continuous improvement, the depth and pace of which is key to the Council's capacity to meet its priorities.

The report makes seven recommendations reinforcing the Council's existing plans for longer term financial planning, transformation and continuous improvement and seeks to advise a more systematic approach to continuous improvement, self-assessment and performance management.

It also recognised the Council's recent increase in the pace of change towards improving the Council including It also recognises the establishment of more robust financial and governance controls to reverse the trend of overspend in some areas and the impact these had on council reserves.

The Accounts Commission's report and the Council's improvement plan can be found at:

www.bit.ly/Best-Value-Audit

How are we performing?

The Annual Performance Report for the period 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019 showed good progress being made in delivering the Council's Programme, "Local Voices, Highland Choices".

77% of the commitments (23 out of the total 30) were either completed, on target or performance was being maintained. For 7 commitments (23%) there was mixed performance or no significant progress.

A Place to Live

The Council's first priority is to the people of the Highlands: the people who live and work here; those who grow up here; have settled here and grow old here.

In 2018/19 there were 525 new homes completed with 665 approvals to go to site. In 2017/18, 290 homes were completed, so over the two years this is an average of 407.5 new homes per year. Raining's Stairs in Inverness was officially opened in October 2018. This award winning development consists of 16 new affordable homes in the heart of Inverness.



Tenant satisfaction with the management of the neighbourhood they live in is 68%, compared to 69% in 2015-17. Tenant satisfaction with the opportunities to participate in decision-making processes is 56%, compared to 47% in 2015-17.



The Gaelic Team submitted 11 applications to the Gaelic Language Act Implementation Fund for 2019-2020. Funding totaling £118,650 was awarded. The Celtic Media Festival took place in June 2019.

A Place to Learn

Schools are at the centre of the lives of our citizens and local communities. Everyone should be given the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills, and experience, regardless of age or background.

Overall attainment is monitored through the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) and key attainment indicators are nationally benchmarked. The Council's new Corporate Plan has now set challenging targets for improvement in education attainment indicators. The current position for the 2018/19 academic year (updated since the 2018/19 annual performance report) is:

59% of pupils achieved 5+ awards at SCQF Level 5 and we were ranked 24th nationally. This compares to Scottish average which is 63%. (2017/18: 61%; Ranked 19th)

12% of pupils from deprived areas achieved 5+ awards at SCQF Level 6 and we were ranked 22nd. This compares to the Scottish average which was 18%. (2017/18: 9%; Ranked 25th).

30% of pupils achieved 5+ awards at SCQF Level 6 and we were ranked 24th nationally. This compares to the Scottish average which was 35%. (2017/18: 32%; Ranked 18th).

Participation rates for 16-19 year olds was 92.2% and we were ranked 15th. This compares to the Scottish average which was 91.6%. (2017/18: 93.8%; Ranked 11th).

35% of pupils from deprived areas achieved 5+ awards at SCQF Level 5 and we were ranked 22nd nationally. This compares to the Scottish average which was 44%. (2017/18: 31%; Ranked 25th).

School attendance rates were 92.8% (2018-19) and we were ranked 21st nationally. This compares to the Scottish average of 93.0%. School attendance rates for Looked After Children for 2018-19 are awaiting verification and are yet to be published.

School exclusion rates were 22.7 per 1,000 pupils (2015-17) and we were ranked 17th nationally. This compares to the Scottish average of 26.8.

School exclusion rates for Looked After Children were 108.8 per 1,000 pupils (2015-17) and we were ranked 20th nationally. This compares to the Scottish average of 80.0.

Our Modern Apprenticeship Programme has exceeded our target to create 150 Modern Apprenticeships, with 191 apprentices supported. We are increasing our target to appoint 300 apprentices by March 2022.

The Council is on track to implement 1,140 hours of high quality early learning and childcare to every eligible child through a phasing approach across Highland. The Council implemented this in seven settings over 2018/19.

The percentage of children achieving their key developmental milestones by the time they enter school was 86% in 2018/19, compared to 84% in 2017/18.

During 2018/19, the Council spent £33.2m on school capital investment, improving condition, suitability and capacity. This included the completion of phase 1 of Inverness High School refurbishment, and works underway on a new Merkinch Primary School, a new Alness Academy, and Smithton Primary phase 2 works.



A Place to Thrive

We will do all we can to strengthen our infrastructure; support the growth of new and existing businesses; and the creation of new jobs.

The City-Region Deal will invest up to £315m into the regional economy. Projects include: The Centre for Health Innovation; Inverness Castle; The Northern Innovation Hub; Science Skills Academy; and Digital Programme, and many more.

The UHI Life Sciences Innovation Centre will be co-located with the new elective hospital and Life Science business incubator building on the Inverness Campus by 2021. £3.75m has been secured from the European Regional Development Fund to enhance the facility. This will improve the commercial activity of Life Sciences across the Highlands and the rehabilitation of patients from across the region.

The Northern Innovation Hub had faced significant delays in securing the business case approval, however all elements are approved including the capital element for a new food and drink centre. The team is in place and operating with businesses and individuals from across Highland.

The Inverness Community Links Plus project is underway. Governance arrangements have been set up and a number of the specific infrastructure interventions are being progressed. There is some slippage arising from engagement and design matters.

The Business Gateway Service continues to support businesses across the Highlands start-up, trade successfully and grow. This service achieved the following in 2018/19

- 280 start-up businesses were assisted;
- 1,802 business enquiries were successfully handled;
- 58 growth businesses were supported, with a number looking to employ people, take on new premises, and develop new markets.

Allied to this, via the Council's loan company (Highland Opportunity (Investments) Limited), the Council invested £936,000 in 21 businesses, including 3 community businesses.

A Welcoming Place

We have an increasingly diverse population and we welcome people of all faiths, nationalities and backgrounds who wish to live, study, work or visit here. We also welcome people who wish to create businesses and those that can work in key sectors where we have skill shortages.

Highland welcomed 6.4 million visitors in 2017, with an economic impact of £1.25 billion. Data for 2018 indicates that there were over 6.5 million visitors to Highland, with an economic impact of £1.285 billion.

Nine applications were submitted to the first round of the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund with six being successful with £1.1 million of grant offered.

Support for the tourism sector and its supply chain businesses has been provided through the Business Gateway Service. This includes hosting further dedicated workshops on subjects such as maximising the opportunities brought by the North Coast 500. A number of tourism related start-ups were supported in 2018/19.

A Highland and Island's Talent Attraction Strategy is in place and partners are progressing the regional and local activity required. Work is progressing on the refresh and population of the Enterprising Highland portal website as a critical source of local information to aid (re)location decisions.

Road Safety

- Three new 20mph schemes have been developed and one scheme implemented in 2018/19.
- Children walking and cycling to school was 52% in the 2017/18 academic year, up from 51%.
- 13 Speed Indication Devices signs were installed via the 20mph programme in 2018/19. These were in Alness, Dingwall and Wick.



A Redesigned Council

The Council will be more open-minded to new ways of delivering services; more commercially-minded, raising income to sustain services and jobs across the region; and more community-minded by listening locally.

Two participatory budgeting events were held in 2018/19. The focus is now to plan how participatory approaches are applied to mainstream service activity.



In 2018/19, there were 69 expressions of interest for community asset transfers, and 15 full community asset transfers were requested, of these:

- 8 have been agreed
- 3 are under consideration
- 4 were withdrawn
- None were rejected

The Redesign Board oversaw peer reviews on Trade Services, Children's Commissioned Services and Agency and Temporary Workers. Recommendations are being implemented. Two new reviews have been commenced – on Catering Services and on Engineering Services. Lean reviews have continued with work on cash collection and trades services, and further proposals to be considered.

The Council's approach to localism continues to develop. During 2018/19 this included:

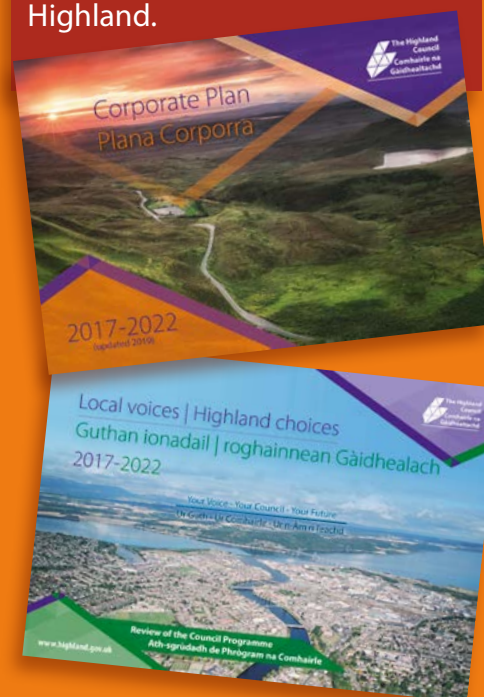
- Responding to the national Local Governance review on potential areas of local decision making
- A seminar to consider strategic, local and community governance in Highland
- Establishing a review of Council Governance
- Reviewing the Community Council Scheme, focusing on understanding how to improve relationships and communications, and improve involvement in local decision making.

Commercial proposals continue to be developed. Opportunities in the energy, tourism and land and property sectors are being progressed.

The Council agreed a 3 year revenue budget in February 2019. Whilst this still shows a funding gap in years 2 and 3 this is a major step forward in terms of restoring medium term financial planning.

Council Programme revision

The Council's Programme, "Local Voices, Highland Choices", was revised in 2018/19. The Corporate Plan which sets out how the Council's Programme will be delivered and addresses external audit feedback, with an increased focus on performance measurement and the Council's 27 Key Performance Indicators. This will help demonstrate the achievement of the Council's vision to be Ambitious for a Sustainable and Connected Highland.





Special offer for Highland Council employees



TORNAGRAIN

£5,000 off the purchase of any home at Tornagrain by quoting code “COUNCIL5” when reserving.*

*1. Valid on reservations before 31st March.
*2. Cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer.

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